



UNDER FIRE

RICHARD PARKER
BASED ON THE DRAMA
OF ROY COOPER, MEGRUER
AUTHOR OF "UNDER COVER" AND CO-AUTHOR OF "IT PAID TO ADVERTISE"
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SYNOPSIS.

Georgy Wagstaff, daughter of Sir George, of the British admiralty, hints at a liaison between her governess, Ethel Willoughby, and Henry Streetman. Ethel denies it. Henry Streetman calls on Ethel and while waiting for her talks to Brewster, Sir George's butler, who is a German spy, about his failure to get at admiralty papers in Sir George's possession. He phones to German secret service headquarters. Streetman, the German spy, and Roeder (alias Brewster, the butler) are discussing the possibility of war. When Ethel appears he tries to force her to get from Sir George knowledge of the sailing orders to the British fleet. Though she believes him a French instead of a German spy, she refuses until he threatens her. She begs him to announce their secret marriage, as Georgy is suspicious, but he puts her off. At tea Georgy and her lover, Guy Falconer, tease Sir George, and Streetman makes an awkward attempt to talk politics. Streetman, the German spy, Sir George Wagstaff, British naval official, Ethel Willoughby, secret wife of Streetman, and others are having tea at the Wagstaff home. The party is discussing a play. Charlie Brown, newspaper man of New York, entertains the tea party with his views on the threatened war in Europe. Guy Falconer declares that if war comes he will go to Cuba. His mother and Sir George reprove him. Charlie says Guy is spoiling. Capt. Larry Redmond of the Irish Guards, calls on Ethel. The two had been undeclared lovers. She tells him of her marriage and he tells her Streetman is a German spy with a family in Berlin.

There is no greater tragedy, in the eyes of men, than the betrayal of an innocent girl. It is an incident in human affairs that has inspired literature in all ages, and provoked murder and suicide. With what emotion Ethel accepts the fact of her betrayal and with what determination she sets out to avenge the wrong, if such a thing is possible, is told in this installment.

Ethel discovers, during her talk with Capt. Larry Redmond that she has been betrayed by Henry Streetman, and expresses her grief.

CHAPTER VIII—Continued.

"Oh, it's everything—everything!" she told him with a dry sob.

"I should never have gone away; or having gone, I should never have come back—to make you suffer like this," he said with bitter self-reproach. "It hurt me terribly to see her so torn by her emotions. 'There, there, my dear! Don't cry!' he said, patting her arm with the tenderness of a woman.

"Oh, let me! Let me!" Ethel cried, for the blessed vent of tears had come to her at last. "Oh, Larry, why couldn't it have been different?"

"Faith, I don't know, my dear! But now with you and me it's only a dream of what might have been—and we must forget," he comforted her bravely.

"Forget?" she repeated brokenly. "Well, we must try to," he said. "We must be friends—the best friends in the world."

"We can't be just—friends," she told him. She knew that their deep love for each other would never let them be merely that.

"We must be!" he persisted with the conviction of a man who would always do right. "We love each other too much to be more—or less—than the best of friends."

From the hall outside, voices came to their ears. And Ethel had scarcely dried her tears before their friends had returned to claim them for the dinner party.

"Great Scott!" Guy Falconer exclaimed as he came upon them. "Still chinning, you two? You never talk to me as long as that!" he told Georgy Wagstaff with mild reproach.

"You're not so interesting as Captain Redmond," she retorted with the cruelty of insolent eighteen.

"Well, admitting that," Guy said, for he never plunged voluntarily into an argument with Georgy, "admitting, that, I've seats for the Palace and we've telephoned to Richmond for a table. So let's hurry."

"I don't think I can go, after all," Ethel told them then. She knew that she was in no condition for the banquet give and take of dinner-table conversation.

"Oh, Ethel!" Georgy cried in obvious disappointment. And "Oh, Ethel! Don't spoil the party!" Mrs. Falconer urged.

"Come on, Larry!" said Guy. "By George, you do look good—just the same as I did when Georgy first refused me. Now I've got used to it."

While they were trying to persuade Ethel to join them, Sir George Wagstaff entered the room. He had heard their voices as he was passing through the hall on his return from his hurried visit to the admiralty. And since he had news that he knew would prove of great interest to them he had stopped on his way to his own quarters.

"By Jove, Redmond! I'm glad to see you!" he cried as soon as he caught sight of the returned wanderer.

"Thank you, Sir George! It's good to be back," Larry replied.

"As a Britisher, you've come home at the right moment," Sir George told him gravely as he shook the captain's hand.

"You mean that there's news of the war—bad news?" Ethel exclaimed,

quick to grasp the suggestion of something serious in Sir George's words and manner both.

"Germany has declared that a state of war exists between herself and Russia. Our information is that France is mobilizing and will support Russia!" Sir George seemed all at once years older under the added cares of the impending conflict.

CHAPTER IX.

For King and Country!

Captain Redmond was the first to break the ensuing silence.

"Good God! Then it's come at last!" he cried in a ringing voice.

"And the fleet! What of the English fleet?" Ethel Willoughby exclaimed, as her quick mind turned inevitably to that most vital factor of Britain's defense. It was pure patriotism that prompted her question. For the moment all thought of Henry Streetman and his constant importuning vanished completely from her reckoning.

Sir George swept the little company with a rapid glance.

"You are all practically members of my family—at least I regard you as such," he said. "Redmond, you are an officer in his majesty's service—what I say is in absolute confidence." Larry stood stiffly at attention.

"Of course, Sir George!" he answered.

Then Sir George told them what Henry Streetman would have given his soul to know.

"Winston Churchill went to Portsmouth this morning. The British fleet sailed this afternoon under sealed orders and Churchill has offered his resignation as first lord of the admiralty."

At that terse statement Ethel Willoughby sank slowly upon a chair. In their excitement the others did not notice her agitation. Nor could they have interpreted it had they divined it. Something in the manner of an inspiration had come to her—a scheme, plot, a stroke of genius perhaps. At all events, she saw in a flash how she might yet serve her country in a manner that is granted to few women—or even men.

Meanwhile Captain Redmond pondered upon Winston Churchill's peculiar action.

"But why, Sir George—why?" he asked.

"Because he had no authority from parliament to give such orders. If

"For once, you dear old thing, I can't argue with you," she said. And though she smiled at him, she had difficulty in keeping back her tears.

Guy Falconer stood very erect as he took his mother by the hand. He saw women in a new light now—easy and recognized the sacrifices they had inevitably made in life's battles, since the beginning of time.

"Come on, mother!" he said gravely. "Take me to the barracks."

"My son, I'm proud of you!" she half whispered, as she looked up at him through her tears.

"So am I!" added Georgy Wagstaff. She had acquired all at once a new sense of proprietorship in Guy. "You'll write me?" she asked him.

"Every day!" he promised eagerly.

"And you—you will be careful, won't you, Guy?" his mother besought him, with her hands upon his shoulders.

"Of course, I'll be careful."

And then they had gone—Mrs. Falconer and Georgy, hanging desperately to him who was dearest of the whole world to them.

Sir George Wagstaff turned to the others with an air of unaffected pride. "There's the true Englishman!" he said.

"And there'll be hundreds—thousands, like him—the flower of our country, who won't come back," Ethel said slowly. "Oh, it's too terrible!" The little tragedy had touched her to the quick. Beside it her own troubles seemed momentarily dwarfed.

"Yes, it is terrible," Sir George agreed. He had no illusions as to what war meant for England.

"I must go at once to the war office," Captain Redmond announced hurriedly. And he shook hands with Miss Willoughby. "Good-by, Ethel!" he said in a tone that was far more sober than was customary for him.

"I must return to the admiralty," Sir George said. "Coming, Redmond?" as he moved toward the door.

Larry had already started to join him when Ethel called him back.

"Larry, before you go, may I have just five minutes with you—alone?"

"Of course!" he assented. "You'll forgive me, Sir George?"

"Surely! See you again, Redmond!" And with that Georgy's father left them—alone.

"Larry, when will you go to the front?" Ethel asked in a tense voice.

He set his cap and stick upon a stool before answering her.

"I don't know," he said. "I'm afraid I shan't be in the thick of the fight."

"You mean they won't send you?"

"I fear not, my dear. They'll want me—they've often said so—for something they call more important than being shot at. They'll use me in the special service—what you'd call a spy. I suppose, though, it's as good as any other way to die for one's country. 'Tis my duty—though I'd not be too proud of it."

For a brief time she made no reply, as she pondered his words.

we're not ready—not the least ready! We shall need every man."

His remark brought home to Larry Redmond a realization of the way in which the situation applied to himself.

"Then, in some ways, it's good I've come back," he commented. "I must report at once."

Guy Falconer turned to him with unbounded enthusiasm lighting up his young face.

"I'll go with you!" he cried. "Is it too late to enlist tonight?"

"I'm afraid so," Larry said. Guy's words struck his mother with a quick chill of fear. She rose hastily from her seat and going fearfully up to her son, laid a supplicating hand upon his arm.

"But, Guy, you're not going to the war?" she said with a catch in her voice.

"Why, of course I am, mother!"

"Of course he is!" Georgy Wagstaff repeated after him.

"But, Guy—you said you wouldn't fight!" his mother reminded him tremulously. Her feelings had undergone a sudden change.

"I know," he said, putting his hand upon hers soothingly. "But that was when I didn't believe there would be war. And now that it's come, I couldn't stay home. I couldn't!"

"That's the spirit, my boy!" Sir George told him with a renewed trust in British manhood.

"But, Guy—you mustn't! I couldn't let you go!" she told him brokenly.

He was sorry for her. And yet there was an unwonted sternness in Guy's face as he said:

"Mother, you don't want me to be a coward?"

"But, my boy, you're all I've got in the world! You're the only thing I've left!" And then she took him in her arms and sobbed. To her had come only a little more quickly than to other English mothers the realization that war demands of lowly and high alike.

"Don't cry, mother, please—don't!" Guy said gently. "You know I've got to go. I'll come back all right."

"Of course he will," said Georgy. "And then I'll marry him." Guy had all at once assumed new proportions in her eyes. She had always been fond of him, from the time they were girl and boy together. But she had never taken him quite seriously. Now, however, she saw that Guy was a man, and that he intended to play a man's part in the approaching struggle. And in that moment Georgy knew that he was more than worthy of her.

A new light shone in Guy's eyes as he turned to the girl.

"Will you really?" he asked. "You hear that, mother? Why, that alone is worth going to the front for—and I'll get a V. C. and be a hero and we'll live happily ever after."

Of such is the rosy optimism of youth.

Georgy Wagstaff placed a hand on his.

"For once, you dear old thing, I can't argue with you," she said. And though she smiled at him, she had difficulty in keeping back her tears.

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For a brief time she made no reply, as she pondered his words.

"Won't you let me help?" she asked him then.

"You?" He wondered what she could mean.

"I do so want to help!" she continued. "There'll be thousands of women who'll go to the front as nurses—millions to do the things at home. But can't I go to serve England—to be in the special service too?"

A shadow crossed his fine face at the mere mention of the undertaking.

"Oh, my dear, I couldn't let you! The risk for you'd be too great. I couldn't permit it."

But she would not be put down so easily.

"Think of the things a woman could do safely—without suspicion," she argued, "where a man would be useless."

"I know, I know—but I couldn't allow it. And your husband?" he questioned. He hardly thought any right-minded man would be willing to let his wife face such peril.

She turned to him impetuously.

"Larry, I lied to you," she confessed. "I'm miserable, wretched. I'm not happy with my husband. I've made a mess of things, like you. I

"For King and Country!"

He saw that she was greatly moved—that she was soul-tortured, half frantic. And he had not the heart to deny her any solace, no matter where she might turn for it.

"I know how you feel," he said, "and you shall do this thing if I can arrange it."

Her heart went out to him in gratitude because he had understood.

"Oh, thank you, Larry! Thank you! Now, tell me—what am I to do? Where shall I be sent? Shall I be with you?" She hoped that it would be so.

"No, my dear—not with me," he explained. "My job will be inside the German lines—perhaps in their very army."

His answer struck a chill of fear into her—for she could feel fear for him.

"But that's impossible!" she exclaimed incredulously. "You would be caught at once."

"Oh, I think not!" he reassured her. "The plan is all arranged—every detail—since before I went away. Now 'tis only for me to carry it out. But you can't be with me."

Her disappointment was obvious.

"But what shall I do?" she asked doubtfully.

"That we'll see. But somehow we'll be working together."

"For king and country!" she exclaimed, holding out her hand to him.

"For king and country!" he repeated after her, as he took her slight hand in his own strong one.

CHAPTER X.

Holst by His Own Petard.

"Beg pardon, Miss Willoughby! A gentleman to see you, by appointment!" In his character of Brewster, Sir George's butler, the German spy Roeder made his announcement in faultless fashion.

"Oh, in just a minute!" Ethel Willoughby told him. She knew that it was Henry Streetman who had returned to see her. And to Larry, whose hand she had hastily dropped just as Brewster threw open the double doors, she said, when the pseudo butler had gone, "I may gain some very important information from this man. I can't explain more than that now. Will you wait in that room?" She indicated a door leading into a smaller room adjoining her sitting room.

"Yes, my dear—God keep you!" Captain Redmond answered. And he at once proceeded to carry out her wishes.

Ethel breathed a rapid prayer as she heard Streetman already mounting the stairs.

"Oh, help me to be brave! Help me to be clever—for Larry and for England!" She turned then to meet the man who had betrayed her, and against whose wits she had now undertaken to match her own.

Will this girl be able to deceive the spy regarding her intentions and inveigle him into permitting her to do as she likes?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Read the Bible While You Can

By REV. HOWARD W. POPE
Moody Bible Institute,
Chicago

TEXT—Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth.—Eccles. 12:1.

It was a wise man who said, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." A striking illustration of the value of this advice came to our notice not long ago. We were calling on a lady who had passed her eightieth birthday. She married a Christian man, and was



a regular church attendant for probably forty years. Indeed she sang in the choir for many years and, heard only good Gospel preaching.

She always enjoyed a good sermon and could give an excellent description of it to those who were not present. She was fond of attending Bible conferences and revival meetings, and entered heartily into the aim and spirit of such services. But she never formed any definite habit of Bible reading; indeed she was not a great reader of anything, except the daily papers. She liked to hear other people expound the Bible, but she would not, or at least did not, read it much for herself.

As old age came upon her, the friends and relatives of early life naturally scattered and died. Her family was all gone, except a devoted daughter with whom she lived. However, all her needs were supplied, as well as the comforts of life.

Lonely and Troubled.

As her daughter was obliged to be away during the day, and she was living in a large city, she was naturally somewhat lonely, but loneliness was not her chief trouble. I found that she had no definite assurance of salvation. She was full of doubt and uncertainty as to the future. She knew the Gospel, but could not seem to grasp it. She prayed, but she had no assurance that God heard or answered her. The Bible afforded her no comfort, for she hardly knew where to find

the passages which she needed, and if another found them for her, they did not sound real and true to her ears, so dull of hearing. She had lost her capacity to enjoy spiritual truth.

She had neglected to store her mind with Bible truth while she was young, and now, when it should have been her daily comfort and chief joy, she had lost her capacity to enjoy it. Had she formed habits of Bible reading in youth as David did, she would now have been familiar with it, and David's experience would have been hers. "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Hers was an old age without a staff, and almost without a God.

How sad is old age without a Saviour, earthly props failing, and no everlasting arm to lean on; forced to leave this world with no hope of heaven!

Old Age Beautified by Faith.

How beautiful is old age when cheered by the presence of the blessed comforter! Grateful for the mercies of the past, it refuses to believe that anything is not a mercy which God permits. The future is full of hope, for we realize that more and more the earthly shall disappear out of our lives, and more and more the heavenly shall come in, until at last we shall "awake in his likeness" and be satisfied.

Growing Old Happily.

Far from the storms that are lashing the ocean,
Nearer each day to the pleasant home light;
Far from the waves that are big with commotion,
Under full sail and the harbor in sight.

Growing old cheerfully
Cheerful and bright.

Past all the winds that were adverse and chilling,
Past all the islands that lured thee to rest;
Past all the currents that wooed thee unwilling
Far from the port and the land of the best.

Growing old peacefully,
Peaceful and blest.

Rich in experience angels might covet,
Rich in a faith that has grown with thy years;
Rich in a love that grew from and above it,
Soothing thy sorrows and hushing thy fears.

Growing old richly,
Loving and dear.

Eyes that grow dim to the earth and its glory
See but the brighter the heavenly glow;
Ears that are dull to the world and its story
Drink in the songs that from Paradise flow.

All the sweet recompense
Youth cannot know.

"We all are tall enough to reach God's hand. The angels are no taller."

God ever speaks to a receptive mind.

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